

REMARKS

The Examiner objected to claims 27, 29-30 and 32 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that claims 27, 29-30 and 32 would be allowable if the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter.

Applicants have incorporated the limitations of claims 27 and 30 into independent claims 1 and 11, respectively.

Applicants have rewritten claims 29 and 32 in independent form, including all of the limitations of claims 1 and 121 from which claims 29 and 32 respectively depend.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-2, 5-8, 11-12 and 15-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over *Pepe et al.* (hereinafter *Pepe*), US 5,673,322, in view of *Gauvin et al.* (hereinafter *Gauvin*), US 5,790,800, and *Gordon et al.* (hereinafter *Gordon*), US 6,671,729.

The Examiner rejected claims 3 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over *Pepe*, *Gauvin* and *Gordon* as applied to claims 1 and 11 above, and further in view of *Batra*, US 6,105,067.

The Examiner rejected claims 4 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over *Pepe*, *Gauvin* and *Gordon* as applied to claims 1 and 11 above, and further in view on *van Landegem et al.* (hereinafter *van Landegem*), US 5,265,091.

The Examiner rejected claims 9 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over *Pepe*, *Gauvin* and *Gordon* as applied to claims 1 and 18 above, and further in view of *O'Connell et al.* (hereinafter *O'Connell*), US 6,661,787.

The Examiner rejected claims 28 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Pepe, Gauvin and Gordon as applied to claims 1 and 11 above, and further in view of Naudus, US 6,412,006.

Applicants respectfully traverse the § 103 rejections with the following arguments.

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35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

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The Examiner indicated that claims 27 and 30 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, Applicants have incorporated the limitations of claims 27 and 30 into independent claims 1 and 11, respectively. Therefore, based on the Examiner's indication of the allowability

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of claims 27 and 30, Applicants respectfully contend that claims 1 and 11 are in condition for allowance. Since claims 2-9 and 28 depend from claim 1, Applicants contend that claims 2-9 and 28 are likewise in condition for allowance. Since claims 12-19 and 31 depend from claim 11, Applicants contend that claims 12-19 and 31 are likewise in condition for allowance.

The Examiner indicated that claims 29 and 32 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, Applicants have rewritten claims 29 and 32 in independent form, including all of the limitations of claims 1 and 121 from which claims 29 and 32 respectively depend. Therefore, based on the Examiner's indication of the allowability of claims 29 and 32, Applicants respectfully contend that claims 29 and 32 are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

Based on the preceding arguments, Applicants respectfully believe that all pending claims and the entire application meet the acceptance criteria for allowance and therefore request favorable action. If the Examiner believes that anything further would be helpful to place the application in better condition for allowance, Applicants invites the Examiner to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below. The Director is hereby authorized to charge and/or credit Deposit Account 09-0457.

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Jack P. Friedman
Jack P. Friedman
Registration No. 44,688

Schmeiser, Olsen & Watts
22 Century Hill Drive - Suite 302
Latham, New York 12110
(518) 220-1850